



NUTRITION FOR ENERGY AND OVERCOMING THE “AFTERNOON CRASH”

The dreadful “afternoon crash” mid-work day often feels completely unavoidable. We tend to suppress feelings of fatigue with an extra cup of coffee or an energy drink. This “afternoon crash” is often caused by what we are eating or what we are not eating. However, we can learn to fuel our bodies without caffeine in order to feel more energized and productive consistently throughout the day.

WHY WE CRASH

These are a few reasons why we may experience the “afternoon crash”

- Blood sugar crash from consuming high sugar breakfast options
- Low protein lunches
- Not properly hydrating throughout the day
- Low fiber intake
- Caffeine reliance

WHAT TO EAT FOR IMPROVED ENERGY

LOW SUGAR BREAKFAST:

A breakfast that is high in sugar will spike your blood sugar in the morning. This can lead to intense energy crashes around mid-day. You should aim for a breakfast that is lower in sugar, higher in protein, and incorporates healthy fats and fiber.

- Eggs with avocado and whole wheat toast
- Plain greek yogurt with blueberries and sprinkled chia seeds
- Cottage cheese with berries and nuts
- Tofu scramble



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BALANCE YOUR LUNCHES:

Your lunch is important because it may encourage energy and productivity for the rest of the day, or do the complete opposite. A heavy carb focused meal may also lead to drowsiness and lack of motivation. Some people may even skip lunch all together, which can have a dramatic decline on your energy levels and ability to focus on your tasks. Try incorporating high protein and balanced meals for lunch.

- Tuna salad lettuce wraps
- Greek chicken with feta and vegetables
- Turkey and hummus wraps
- Tempeh stir fry

PROPER HYDRATION:

It is often overlooked that hydration has an important impact on your energy levels. Dehydration is often considered to be the “silent culprit” of brain fog and fatigue. Water is essential for brain function and mental sharpness. This is especially significant when it comes to that “afternoon crash” since it is easy to forget to hydrate within a busy work schedule.

- Drink a glass of water first thing in the morning
- Carry a reusable water bottle
- Add a pinch of sea salt to your water for electrolytes
- Infuse water with fruits and herbs for added nutrients and flavors
- Consume foods with higher water content such as soups, stews, and fruits.



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MINDFUL CAFFEINE CONSUMPTION:

Reaching for that mid day coffee might be your immediate solution for your “afternoon crash”. However, the more you rely on caffeine the more your body will become desensitized by the effects. This can promote over consumption and lead to the negative effects such as heart palpitations and anxiety. Here are some tips on how to be more mindful of your caffeine consumption.

- Try having your first cup of coffee later, around 10:30 - 11 (after cortisol levels have dropped)
- Limit to one cup of coffee per work day
- Try lower caffeine options such as matcha or green tea (has lower caffeine but longer lasting effects)

BRAIN FOODS:

There are nutrient dense foods that help to support steady energy, promote mental clarity, and improve memory and mood. Food with nutrients such as Omega-3 fatty acids, B vitamins, antioxidants, magnesium, and amino acids are essential for brain functions and cognitive performance. By incorporating foods with these nutrients you will support your brain health and avoid the “afternoon crash”.

- Fatty fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines)
- Dark leafy greens (kale, spinach, collard greens)
- Berries (blueberries, strawberries, blackberries)
- Beans and legumes (black beans, garbanzo, lentils)
- Nuts and seeds (Walnuts, almonds, pumpkin seeds)
- Eggs
- Dark Chocolate (70% or higher)